REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the final Office Action mailed August 25, 2003 (Paper No. 2). Reexamination and reconsideration in light of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully solicited.

Claims 1-27 remain pending in the application, with Claims 1, 7, 11, 16, and 23 being the independent claims. Claims 1, 3, 23, and 27 have been amended herein. No new matter is believed to have been added.

Drawing Objections

The drawings were objected to as allegedly failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(p)(4) and (5) as allegedly containing improper reference numerals and reference numerals allegedly not mentioned in the description. In response, Applicants submit herewith a complete set of formal replacement drawings that correct the reference numerals, as necessary. In those instances where drawing corrections were not made, the specification has instead been amended to recite the reference numerals not previously mentioned. Applicants wish to note that, reference numeral 1080 was allegedly not mentioned in the description, this reference numeral is indeed mentioned on page 12, line 25.

Applicants submit that the drawings now meet all the requirements of 37 C.F.R. § 1.84, and request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections to the drawings. Applicants further request approval of the revised drawings.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a)

1. Takamoto et al.

Claims 1, 3, 6, 16-18, 23, and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by EP 762705 A2 (Takamoto et al.). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 1 relates to a method of adding packet ordering information to a plurality of data packets that includes applying error codes to each of the plurality of data packets and recites, *inter alia*, masking each of the plurality of data packets to which the error detection codes have been applied.

Independent Claim 16 relates to a communications device that includes a packet receiver, a mask store, an unmasking device configured to unmask received packets and recites, *inter alia*, an error detection device coupled to the unmasking device, the error detection device being configured to detect errors in unmasked received packets.

Independent Claim 23 relates to a communications device that includes a packet formatter, a forward error device, and a mask store, and recites, *inter alia*, a masking device coupled to the mask store and the forward error device and responsive thereto to mask each of the formatted packets to which the error codes have been applied.

Takamoto et al. relates to a system and method for transmitting data over a network and discloses dividing transmitted data into packets, and furnishing the divided data packets with tags. The furnished tags include destination ID, a flag indicating division of data, a packet ID, a division count, a division ID, and a transmission time. Takamoto et al. additionally discloses detecting whether errors have occurred in the transmitted data. However, the error detection that is disclosed in Takamoto et al. occurs after the data packets are tagged.

Hence, Takamoto et al. fails to disclose, or even remotely suggest, at least the above-noted features of independent Claims 1 and 23. Namely, Takamoto et al. fails to disclose masking each of the plurality of data packets to which the error detection codes have been applied, as recited in independent Claim 1. Moreover, Takamoto et al. fails to disclose a masking device coupled to the mask store and the forward error device and responsive thereto to mask each of the formatted packets to which the error codes have been applied, as recited in independent Claim 23.

As regards Claim 16, Takamoto et al. discloses receiving data packets. However, as illustrated in FIGS. 20 and 26, and the associated descriptive text, it is the tagged data packets are checked for errors. Moreover, it is only after all the tagged data packets are received error free are the tags removed from the data packets. Hence, Takamoto et al. additionally fails to disclose, or even remotely suggest, at least the above-noted features of independent Claim 16. Namely, Takamoto et al. fails to disclose an error detection device coupled to the unmasking

device, the error detection device being configured to detect errors in unmasked received packets, as recited in independent Claim 16.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the the above-noted § 102(a) rejection.

2. Weiss

Claims 11, 12, and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,754,482 (Weiss). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 11 relates to a method of determining the transmitted order of a received packet relative to other received packets, and recites, *inter alia*, setting a temporary ordering mask equal to a next ordering mask in a list of ordering masks.

Weiss relates to a system and method for synchronizing encryption and decryption systems and discloses maintaining sequence numbers at both the transmission end and receiving end of an encrypted communication, to ensure error free transmission of the encrypted data. However, nowhere does Weiss disclose, or even remotely suggest, at least the above-noted feature of independent Claim 11. Namely, Weiss fails to disclose or suggest setting a temporary ordering mask equal to a next ordering mask in a list of ordering masks, as recited in independent Claim 11.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the the above-noted § 102(a) rejection.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2, 4, 5, 7-10, 13, 15, 19-22, and 25-27 were variously rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Takamoto et al., Weiss, U.S. Patent No. 5,528,693 (Leopold), U.S. Patent No. 5,761,431 (Gross et al.), and WO 9,949,695 A1 (Larsson et al.). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As regards Claims 2, 4, 5, 13, 15, 19-22, and 25-27, as noted above, the independent Claims from which these claims depend recite at least one feature not disclosed by either Takamoto et al. or Weiss, as applicable. Moreover, Applicants

submit that none of the additional cited references, namely neither Leopold, Gross et al., nor Larsson et al., make up for at least the noted deficiencies.

As regards Claims 7-10, it is noted that independent Claim 7 relates to a method of determining a packet order of a received packet and recites, *inter alia*, applying at least one ordering mask to the received packet in a known order from a list of ordering masks to find a current ordering mask that was previously used to mask the received packet.

As was previously noted, Weiss relates to a system and method for synchronizing encryption and decryption systems and discloses maintaining sequence numbers at both the transmission end and receiving end of an encrypted communication, to ensure error free transmission of the encrypted data. However, nowhere does Weiss disclose, or even remotely suggest, at least the above-noted feature of independent Claim 7. Namely, Weiss fails to disclose or suggest applying at least one ordering mask to the received packet in a known order from a list of ordering masks to find a current ordering mask that was previously used to mask the received packet. Rather, Weiss discloses maintaining sequence numbers using a local counter. The sequence numbers, however, are not in a known order from a list of sequence numbers.

Gross et al. which was combined with Weiss in rejecting Claims 7-10 does not make up for at least the above-noted deficiency of Weiss with respect to independent Claim 7.

Hence, reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejections is respectfully solicited.

Conclusion

Based on the above, independent Claims 1, 7, 11, 16, and 23 are patentable over the citations of record. The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable for the reasons given above with respect to the independent claims and because each recite features which are patentable in its own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully solicited.

The other art of record is also not understood to disclose or suggest the inventive concept of the present invention as defined by the claims.

Hence, Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or suggestions that could place this application in even better form, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the below-listed number.

If for some reason Applicant has not paid a sufficient fee for this response, please consider this as authorization to charge Ingrassia, Fisher & Lorenz, Deposit Account No. 50-2091 for any fee which may be due.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: November 24 2003

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